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ABSTRACT

This videotape explores a shift in philosophy in the Wisconsin public schools from one in which parents are excluded from affecting the classroom to one in which parents and teachers actively work together for classroom improvement. The first part of the video deals with the "Protection" model. Teachers and parents relate their experiences with this model, whereby a "wall" is built to keep parents from "hurting the system." This model: (1) is defined as friction between parents and schools; (2) takes as a basic approach separating parents and school; (3) assumes the school is responsible for the children's learning; (4) assumes the parents' job is to hold the school accountable; (5) regards two-way communication and routine problem solving as inappropriate. The video also presents an illustrative conversation in which parents advocate more hands-on activities in the classroom, and teachers and administrators provide excuses for maintaining the status quo. The second part of the video deals with the "partnership" model. This model is characterized by: (1) parents and educators working together to help all children achieve success; (2) emphasis on two-way communication; (3) routine problem solving; (4) building on parents' strengths; and (5) rethinking of the entire school environment. In the video, parents and teachers describe their experiences with this model, and discuss how to present to parents what the children are learning, with more hands-on activities and fewer paper-and-pencil items to send home. The last part of the video touches on the journey to the partnership model, and staff concerns with this new model. (HTH)

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